

SELF PORTRAIT

AND OTHER STROKES



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Selfportrait

& Other Strokes

(miscellanea)

Poetry - the only thing I did really well.

I was born on the "heights" of communism, and I will end on the "elysian planes" of democracy (an ironic look toward the hegelian philosophy, that charming fiction).

The world I live in (a historical glimpse): Ancient traditions give a picture of how human society emerged and evolved on the background of more or less cosmic wars. Some regions were 'centers of civilization', through technology, government, science, art. Material progress was never matched by the changes in human behavior. There were and are speculative theories about former intelligent forms of life in or beyond our galaxy. In the meantime, planet Earth is gradually depleted of its resources and the human species is ageing and degenerating.

Having a public role/a job - being a 'role', a 'character' is a reminder of the saying 'the world is a stange'. So, the public role must not be confused with the 'real' person, in spite of the overlapping.

In 1983 or 1984, around Christmas, I started a set of reading notes under the title *natal meditations*. There was no direct connection to religion/faith, but the idea of spiritual renewal/renovatio inspired me. It was a desire for 'enlightenment', for live thinking, a search for a way of life, guided by a modest, determined principle - to do

things a little better. I had never entertained the prospect of a career (although I had the chance/offer of an academic one). It is nothing to be proud of, but speaking of Christmas, there is no trace of 'career' there.

After several decades, looking back on my life, I almost fully realised what I should have done or said in another way, or not at all. This is what is called experience. Illuminating. Bitter. Pointing, once again, toward *dignity through humility*.

Emil Botta, a Romanian charismatic actor and a gifted, highly original poet and essayist, received one day the visit of two journalists. He lived in the center of Bucharest, in one room equipped with a bed, a table, a chair and a small clothes closet. The visitors were surprised not to find at least one book... Not the minimalism is one can learn from it, but the question how to strike a balance between *material needs* and *spiritual duties*.

Philosophy

-parvum in multo. jargonic jungle, shameless redundancy, opportunistic subjects, simple-made-complicated, shallowness

-philosophers are trying to formalize common sense experience, to reduce its multifaced being to a scheme (mcdowell: "dress up a truism in high-flown language")

-philosophers are artisans of procrustian beds

-philosophers's obsession with pinning down all facts of life in a sort of exit-in-case-of-fire schema

-G.E.Moore had offered a proof that external objects exist: 'here is one hand and here is another; so two human hands exist; so external objects exist'- is this from a comic book? there is like saying "there is no sun in the sky" (people unconvinced by it might try the Icarus experiment). this is epistemology construed upon a wrong ontology

-the Achilles' and tortoise paradox is an useless, ridiculous intellectual exercise, as long as it has no correspondence in real life /why bother with the paradox, when the tortoise has never the speed of a human

-all talk about God is of a hypothetical nature. the philosophical/theological arguments for God are a case of "deus ex machina" . after all, religious belief has nothing to do with justification - the belief is justified by itself. philosophical debates about the existence of God are contingent historically. 'existence of God'/'God is Being' is a fictive tautology: Being/existence is a synonym, not a predicate

-why bother if 'everything that is green is extended' or 'all cats are animals' are analytic or synthetic? it adds nothing to the content/knowledge. a logical truth as 'all dogs are dogs' is just empty. 'puzzling' anaphora are not puzzling at all, if they are taken contextually

-the exaggerations of materialists/naturalists are understandable as long as they were fed up with the galimatias/delirium of the idealists

-Kant's commentators disagree on a lot of issues -it wouldn't be so, if Kant himself would have always known what he was saying. Kant's philosophy of the thing-in-itself is kind of 'you can have your cake and eat it too'.

-in philosophical terms, "possible" cannot refer to possible worlds, only to possibilities in this world

-Wittgenstein tends to be systematic, but it fails. discarding metaphysics is a consequence of his engineer background/obsession with language as a tool. as engineers do, he's always after practical solutions. his philosophising is outside the history of philosophy. indifference, if not disdain, for academia, is thus understandable

-if we are in a non-spatial world, how are our actions to be explained when they involve doing and doing with measurable objects? it is not only representation of things, but there is the production and use of them in a spatially way

-how important is it to know if the 'world' has a beginning? if it has, the question is always: 'what was before it?'/infinity regress. if it does not have it, it is indifferent to

us as finite entities. so, absolutely useless/correlating the issue of 'freedom' with the cosmological one is an intellectual artifice (anthropocentrism through the back door)

-what with all the fuss of offering proves for the existence of God? a belief is just that - a belief. and for living a righteous life a religious belief is not a necessary premise, but might fulfill the role of justification

-philosophers' rambling about parallel worlds is understandable: philosophy is a parallel world, with doubtful influence on the enlightening/improvement of the daily life. philosophy, like poetry, is just another hobby

- "A formula like: 'I breathe' (or 'I walk'), 'therefore I am', does not have the same properties, because we can question the existence of this body with which I breathe or walk. An inference like: '*I think* I'm breathing (or walking), therefore I am' is, however, entirely valid". (Descartes n'a pas dit, 2015)

if I didn't exist there would be no one to say 'I breathe'. the simple word 'I' indicates the self-aware individual. Augustine indicates the imperfection of human reason (dubito, ergo sum)/man is defined as an imperfect being, but perfectible by orientation towards divinity. for Descartes man is defined by thinking/reason. the consciousness of self-existence is preconceptual - I do not remove the doubt about my own existence by discovering the (skeptical) act of thinking.

-using only 'she' instead of 's/he' for the sake of anti-discrimination makes philosophers appear ridiculous and degrades them to the level of petty ideologues

-it is not possible to build a universal conceptual scheme starting from one language or several languages because the formation/evolution of languages was different and arbitrary. also, grammar is irrelevant for metaphysics, having a contingent character. language is an imperfect tool through which we approximate the interpretation of the world in general and of human existence on an individual and collective level

-the human reason-nature analogy is an anthropomorphic and animistic approach. the teleological perspective is a variant of mechanistic philosophy. man-nature analogies are thousands of years old. they are common sense observations, some naive (phenomena and natural objects as 'divine' replicas of humanity), others with the

aspect of general laws (ephemerality, determinism). but the influences of the stars on communities and individuals and the meanings of numerology are independent of the act of analogy

- (note to the paper "Kant and Fate" signed by M.Hunt) my suggestion is to have an alternative view of fate, as the causality explained by astrology and numerology (i suppose that Kant would have discarded with contempt such an idea). those disciplines do not offer, as the public usually expect, a total map of causality, but only a general configuration (opportunities, limits, and risks), with a possibility to calculate the chances of free will. from a strictly personal view, i do not need reward, punishment, belief in afterlife, immanent justice and so on - to do what is good for the sake of it (of course, i understand that 'good' is subject of various interpretations)

. the study of rational theology indicates the goals of reason. therefore, its merit is only secondary theological. in other words, let's get to know each other better, but reason appears as a universal/homogeneous/undifferentiated phenomenon from individual to individual 1) the theological character of the discussion becomes irrelevant 2) the perspective on reason is abstract. faith and rational theology they exclude each other. belief is not justified and is irrational. faith is the establishment of some reassuring, conventions that are not subject to theoretical and practical validation.

. ontotheology, a 'poetic' term/linguistic narcissism (common to the jargon of philosophy), without any contribution to knowledge

. post kantian german idealists: lunatics

. the paradox of the stone is false: whatever is created by God is subject to his power/is omnipotent. so, the question whether God can create a stone that he cannot lift is meaningless/sophistry.

. it seems obvious that the kantian approach to the origin, nature and limits of thinking pertains to psychology. it is an attempt to retain for philosophy a field of knowledge from what remained with the separation and autonomy of the natural sciences. Kant thinks about (his own) thinking, his self-knowledge is from the

perspective of the individual as universal. to the mathematician, the physicist, the chemist, the biologist, the engineer, the historian, the sociologist and other specialists the writings of Kant or of any other philosopher are not necessary. ignoring the "general principles" of philosophers does not affect the construction of one's own methodologies.

I have learned to live by my candle, not in the shadow of other lights.

perceptions of time

- "after life" view/aerial view : when I was 20 I had a view of my lifespan similar to a road contemplated from a plane, a slideshow with smooth transition effect » extreme detachment/top of objectivity, no matter what kind of events I would have gone through
- common view/horizontal view : time felt like distances on a plain walked from one point to another » blurring of the feeling of the passing/flowing time, eternal present in a more or less changed landscape
- "emergency" view/vertical view : time contemplated as a countdown or a sand-glass » dramatically changed perspective of the events, urgency to ask after a sense of life, facing choices of responsibility
- the intersection of the three points of view is setting up a geometry of personal time, challenging the "speed" of life, in terms of managing the information, the daily tasks, the inner evolution and its interface, the relations with other people

A poor present is invaded by the past. All our motivations and deeds are nullified by our mortality.

Travelling through your own memories is like running to and fro in a trap, a cage.

There is a difference between probable and improbable possibilities

Some of the finest love letters are those of Otto von Bismarck, usually remembered for the (misinterpreted) "blood and iron" speech.

A charm of some text I have read may almost be gone when I find out that the author had opinions marked by strong prejudices, sectarianism and hatred.

A basketballplayer declared that he wasn't interested in watching basketball games, only in playing. Similarly, I'm no more interested in reading poetry, as in writing it.

Horace Walpole: "This world is a comedy to those that think, a tragedy to those that feel". The premises for a sense of humor do not exclude feeling, and thinking is not absent from the sense of tragedy. Even more - the deeper the thinking, the keener the sense of tragedy. Henry James: Life is a matter of taste, of art ("a temple of taste"), complex (paradoxical, "all comically, all tragically"/ baroque).

La Mettrie is back: Stephen Hawking said that the human brain is like a computer that will stop working when its components fail. It is a more sophisticated version of *L'homme machine* /Machine man, yet still simplistic. If the human brain might be compared with a computer, then it is a heavily virused one.

Like the French physician and philosopher of the 18th century, Hawking was a cheerful and lively person. This is quite remarkable for one who didn't believe in afterlife and had to put up with such a severe physical condition.

Intuition is filtered either by an idealistic, or by a pragmatic approach.

Metaphorical language supports both of them.

We have knowledge through senses (not very reliable) and through instruments to see at macro- and micro-levels. Observation and experiment (even trivial, as for example, the haircut) are the basic actions mapping the environment and our knowing the world & knowing ourselves. The world isn't so structured as to accommodate our knowledge - we are just a part of it and our knowledge activity is similar to that of knowing your neighbours. To know is not an odyssey/ a journey back to home, it is a journey/a stroll in the neighbourhood. The home is you, you are the house & the individual inside it/you are a living house. Astrology and numerology gives an idea of the history and architecture of the house. The house metaphor is valid only for you, the others see you as a person who might enter or not other houses. The dualism house/person is to be applied to society as a whole, not in the cartesian manner as body/mind.

The structure of cognition is part of the structure of reality. The conditions of thought are universal because of it. A thought is not always expressed in words. Usually, thoughts are preceded by feelings and pictures.

No polemics, no nostalgia, no useless confessions - they unsettle the mind, confuse the judgment. And - indifferent to hope.

A friendly solitary person is one whose short explosions are followed by long implosions.

Remember your own mistakes as a lesson, not as continuous trial and fresh remorse.

One more illusion when someone says "I have no illusions".

Wisdom has a sour taste.

Social relations are, more or less, a kind of a trap, inside of another trap, that of the local historical space and time.

Pepys' Diary: interesting up to a point (historical source). Overall - boring triviality.

domestic happiness

I would have expected that a "great man" of letters would be happy with books and studies. The "zoon politikon" would bring the "savant" together - acquaintance or friendship- with other human beings. If such a life would be void of a love other than the one breathed along the reading, studying and writing seemed to me compensated by the pleasure and the fruits of the work. The reading of Lessing and Heine proved this a prejudice.

on the death row

I am writing this while I am on the death row. You are reading it on the death row too. I don't mean the usual prison death row, although it could be the case. I don't mean the terminal disease either. What I have in mind is our mortality. Pretty commonplace, isn't it? But I'm thinking of this condition lining us in a death row, with a life sentence. When we are born, the sand-glass starts to countdown, grain by grain. You can imagine a clock doing this, only we don't know where it stops. There are exceptions, making the rule more gruesome. They wake up unpleasant emotions, kept back in the mind when we are immersed in the daily routine. There are exceptions to the exceptions too - think of the sacrificial joy of people blowing themselves for some cherished cause, or of the mass suicide of some 'enlightened' sect. Usually, countdown is associated with some exhilarating event. New Year's Eve for example.

Or any other moment heralding a 'refreshment', a new 'path' or 'level'. The supreme countdown, the suspense due to the secret of number you drew before entering this world are rarely present with us as described here. If it would be the case, perhaps the mental illnesses statistics would be different. The image of us all in a death row questions once again the sense of human life and of the entire life. A sense is more doubtful when other, human set up death rows are framed in the general one. I mean the abuses, individual or collective, leading, sooner or later, to death. The local/'subjective' slaughter house inside the cosmic/'objective' one. People made wonderful stories and images about redemption, about the power of love, about the inspirational relation with nature. One can agree with Eugene Ionesco that the world is a miracle with oases of evil, or say with Kertesz Imre that the good, not the evil can't be explained. The instinct of survival will always provide hope, even in suicide. But ultimately nothing can change the raw fact of us being on the death row. It is the dead point in a conscience when only faith can move you on, absurd vs. absurd (*credo, quia absurdum*). Or defiant indifference toward pantragism (*carpe diem*).

The sense of "the big picture" becomes a failure when translated into a centralized history workplace.

Handle ideas, rather than biographies (history is symbol - TSEliot: patterns of timeless moments | RJCampbell, apud GAGaskell: historical facts as picture language of great ideas).

"Order" is the keyword of Carl Schmitt's intellectual task and "homogeneity" is the keyword of its results. No wonder that Niklas Luhmann, focused on "difference", did not see any merit in Schmitt's work.

Some spot in the history seen as a desirable place to live is perceived as a continuous present. This paradoxical eleatism is illustrated by some poems of Nichita Stănescu, dated 'Today' by the author.

As a teenager I became fascinated with the abstract art. The *White on White* was for me the essence of it. One must say everybody is able to do such a (silly) thing. But the picture of Malevich is the outcome of a spiritual quest, the projection of a religious experience. It is the utmost of his "Suprematism" . I think it is the inner and extreme rational frontier of human existence, echoing the near death experiences.

To cut the gordian knot of the body-soul debate means to not seeking a definition of the soul. Instead, just study the thoughts and acts in relation to others and the self, in the micro- and macro social context.

Reich-Ranicki changed his ophthalmologist because the doctor was more inclined to impress the critic with his up-to-date knowledge of the new novels and didn't (apparently) show much interest in his domain. The moral: everyone has to mind his/her own business/expertise. I don't know how did Ranicky manage to draw a conclusion about the doctor's professionalism on the above mentioned observation. Is it possible that Ranicki was a bit unsettled by the fact that the man was a doctor and a passionate of literature (doctors had always have a keen interest in arts).

Accepting a Nobel prize for literature is a concession to vanity and disrespect for writers who were not named as recipients of this distinction. Apart from it, literature awards are a way of stimulating (through curiosity or snobbery) reading. and accepting any such award is not giving up a useful prey in a world based on laws of power.

The sheer amount of tragedies neutralizes the sentiment of tragic.

Spartans are admired as warriors. It is another, more valuable, example of theirs, that it had not been learned - to be laconic.

life & art - Goethe

Goethe hat immer versucht (ein ganzes Leben vielleicht) Gleichgewicht zu erlangen und zu bewahren. Das war um so schwer, als er gegen jedes Erstarren, jedes Gewordenen war veranlagt. Es ist also ein Gleichgewicht des Werdens. Was für ein Werden? Er ist von der Unumwandlung der Welt überzeugt. Ein Widerspruch, der sich als Grund einer gesteigerten Unruhe macht. Der Trost kann man in der Beschaulichkeit und in der Forschung der Natur finden. Die Verehrung der Natur ist für Goethe so gut wie eine Religion. Eine Religion des Schönes, nicht des Gutes und Böses. Was Schönes, Edles ist, ist im Sonnenlicht gerückt. Das irdische Werden ist absurd, nur die Tätigkeit kann helfen gegen Unzufriedenheit und Zweifel, ohne jeder Zweck als der der Tätigkeit selbst. Die Kunst ist das Tun eines Verehrer des Schönes, die künstliche Schönheit eine Täuschung, und wenn sie es nicht ist, dann haben wir eine verdoppelte Tragödie (Werther). Wie später bei Henry James, die Kunst rechtfertigt das Leben. Durch Kunst will Goethe über die Absurdität und die Tragödie des Lebens sich täuschen, diese verneinen (im 20ste Jahrhundert *wiederspiegelt* die Kunst die Absurdität und die Tragödie). Ohnehin, ist das Leben für Goethe eine Tragödie wie bei den alten Griechen. Goethe ist ein Vertreter der Renaissance (das 18. Jahrhundert ist, wahrscheinlicherweise, eine Spätrenaissance), und er trägt die Lessingsche Auffassungen weiter.

life & art - Henry James

Sometimes, Henry James' phrase is as heavy as Kant's. His descriptions of thought process, his dialogues are kindred Góngorian. It is the result of his commitment to a

high subtlety of ideas and, therefore, as he emphasizes in the preface to *The Golden Bowl*, of his mastering of "literary form conceived in the light of poetry". That is "imagination"/"charm and spell" ("to be great", "human furniture", "triumph of selection"). The New Imperium (America) is absorbing the Old one (Rome) and that is exactly what is called imperial attitude. "Empire" is not only a space, but also a treasurer of the time, time as a perpetual present. It is something over human feelings, it is a supreme order of values. In Ransmayr's *Die letzte Welt* the Empire is a perversion of the art/supreme values/freedom. The vicarious God (Augustus, Adam Verver) assumes Beauty as a possession, as a perfect object, with the difference in James' book that the author is sympathetic to his emperor personage. James doesn't stress, as Ransmayr does, the social connections, but his notion of beauty has a consistency of its own (aestheticism). A state of beauty on Earth is to fulfill a heavenly call and thus, to fulfill a duty ("occult power"). It is an order of sort, a "golden bowl", a whole with a flaw, not a whole in itself, only gathered by pieces, by historical items, with money purchased beauty. This is a romantic impulse (Amerigo can't resist it), springing from "seeing so much". The one who is full of "tradition" has the deep wisdom of being a piece in the "Beauty", thus more alive, more organic than the Messiah by a Museum (The Prince/Amerigo vs. Verver) – "romantic", new, richness through base means vs. "classic", old (settled in a long process), simple vs. complicated, "abject" vs. sublime. Beauty is happiness, expressed by the golden bowl. In *The American*, Madame de Bellegarde is compared to a painted perfume-bottle with a crack in it, as a symbol of deceiving perfection. And so it is the character of Madame Merle in *The Portrait of a Lady*: "even the hardest iron pots have a little bruise, a little hole, somewhere. I flatter myself that I am rather stout porcelain; but I must tell you the truth I have been chipped and cracked!", "I have been cleverly mended; and I try to remain in the cupboard", "But when I have to move to come out, and into a strong light [...] I am a horror!". In *The Ambassadors* James writes that truth may be achieved only out of the beauty-realm. Life is a matter of taste, of art ("a temple of taste"), complex (paradoxical, "all comically, all tragically"/ baroque). In *The Portrait Of A Lady*, Osmond claims "that one ought to make one's life a work of

art", but as Ralph Touchett makes it plain to Isabel, Osmond is only a vulgar fellow: he cares only for the effects, "produced by no vulgar means", "the motive was as vulgar as the art was great", "lived so much in the land of calculation" "to please himself by exciting the world curiosity and declining to satisfy it". In a rich in nuances novel (*Spiel mit der Wirklichkeit*), Gustav Hillard makes Dr. Strix to say, as a tribute to Goethe, that "die Wirklichkeit nur ästhetisch rechtfertigen läßt". For Goethe, the art was the only harmony to get, to protect against the general nonsense. For Hebbel, the art was the reflection of the way to the restoration of the harmony and the way itself. I find that James with his "golden bowl" is closer to Hebbel understanding of art as a realized philosophy (Vorwort zur Maria Magdalena – "Die Kunst ist die realisierte Philosophie, wie die Welt die realisierte Idee. Die Welt eben erst in der Kunst zur Totalität zusammengeht"; Vorwort über die *Erzählungen und Novellen* – "Wenn die Kunst auch allerdings auf der Wahrheit ruht, die Wahrheit doch keineswegs ihr letztes Ziel ist"; "Die Welt ist eine Zwiebel, die nur aus Häuten besteht, und die Kunst soll ihr gleichen").

life & art - Christoff Ransmayr, *Die letzte Welt* (The Last World) The main idea of the novel: all is metamorphosis, as the Roman poet Ovid (central hidden character) and Pythagoras were saying. This law of nature is opposed by the vanity of the dictatorial regime of the Roman Emperor (Octavian). On the contrary, the artist is the voice of freedom, because the artist fully understands the law of eternal change. But the artist and the autocrat have in common the conceited pleasure of glory (chapter 3). As a symbol of freedom, the artist is used for political interests, the artistic creation being manipulated for the benefit of group and short-time claims (chapter 6). The burning of the manuscripts (chapter 1) is motivated by this narrow-minded, rigidly political reasoning. Poetry is of the same kind with the cosmic force of evolution and the force of geological memory ("The Book of Stones", in chapter 7; the myth of Eco, in chapters 5 and 7). It is a creative memory: the fly evolves from the stone stage (chapters 7 and 8) and from the one of an abominably sex (the myth of Philomela, chapters 14-15). Mankind is badly aware of its place in the world, aggressiveness

dominating its behavior. To get the chance of an authentic life, one has to move far away from the center of the autocratic power control, symbolized by the rhinoceros. Ransmayr underlies the contrast civilization-savageness/myth: the carnival/ poetical creation as self-invention (the genuineness of masks, chapter 4), the ruins of Trachila (chapters 11 and 12), the dangerous play with the technical marvels (brought by Iason, chapter 9). The weakness of Man is also suggested by the fragile border between tragedy and the cheap trick in the movie showed by Cyparis. But here is also the possibility to transgress a base condition, through the desire (a physical one, as hunger) for something else. And here again the peril to be manipulated through art/fiction. The Echo (chapter 15) and the allusion to the chronology of mankind (the "gold age" of the imperial homeland, the "iron age" Tomis, *the castaway's city* says Fama) are the images of a non-self identical circularity. The exile (the banishment of Ovid is the first recorded in the history of literature) is depicted as an escape from the lie of the political reality in the mythical reality of nature, still is lingering the bitterness of giving up an ideal almost fulfilled.

T. C. W. Blanning, *The Culture of Power and the Power of Culture (Old Regime Europe 1660-1789)* : For the Baroque prince, representational display was not self-indulgence, it was his metier (p.59). Why not: self-indulgence = metier ?

To say that the "essence" of man and the "purpose" of history is "freedom" is an abuse of wishfull thinking.

An inspired/'winged' poem has its counterpart in one of the best races of a runner athlete.

Antonio Magliabechi wore his clothes until they fell from him, and thought it a great waste of time to undress at night, "life being so short and books so plentiful"- scholarly passion, unbounded bookish curiosity, academic vanity, endless physical

need of the brain to be permanently supplied with written information, obsession disorder?

Enlightenment A. Ontological approach

"-" A.1) to know all is an illusion, all other aspects are irrelevant > chaotic homogeneity (Buddhism)

"+" A.2) direct knowledge, based on paradox and love > harmonious and hierarchical homogeneity (Christianity) the way to ontology goes through ethics | the ethics of the Old Testament are surpassed by the strong emotion of love (linked to the Asian "think positive"), beyond "good and evil

" B. "-" Sociological approach (the mainstream of modern Enlightenment): to know/what, how, why > Freedom vs Despotism (justified by divine law, ie religion), Reason vs Arbitrariness no limits to the human mind | social revolution | all is possible, it is no Absolute > a new arbitrariness, multi centered, democratic (extreme form of the Baroque?), chaotic heterogeneity

C. "+" Epistemological approach (Pilatus, Kant: What is Truth? John 18.38), aiming to a global understanding of both ontological and sociological, limits-as-order and order-as freedom | social evolution, according to universal laws (respect of the hierarchy) much in common with A.2, stressing human "progress", sort of a paradise on earth | idealises the humanity of Jesus (as a "citizen"/Heinrich Heine: le bon dieu citoyen) B. and C. are underlaid by mechanical views: function- and structure-pattern

Gerold Prauss: Kant - die Einheit von Subjekt & Objekt . The beginning of the universe is a move, a change, and all that follows has that move as kern/all is in time. The problem is with the environment of the "big bang", ultimately with our incapacity to understand the infinite (no start, no end, no origin, no limit). And this would be the main cause of human knowledge as convention.

Political “disengagement”

A Romanian philosopher, Constantin Noica, compared politics with weather forecast, because politics is beyond the realm of “eternal” truths/laws of the universe, and is so circumstantial.

We could look too at present politics as to a past thing, as to Pompeii wrapped in cold lava.

The actual state of the world is, as always has been, on the edge of anarchy, due to all sorts of shortsighted actions. Realpolitik is often opposed to utopian blueprints not as pragmatism, but as dystopia.

The more of a dictator one is, the more a coward one is. Ideology (secular or religious) is, in such a case, more than ever, only a decoy and a non-debatable “truth”.

Religion is only another anthropologized representation of the world, but claiming a supreme cognitive and social ruling status. Atheism is the other side of the coin, a naked exposed religion.

Byron was a democrat among aristocrats and an aristocrat among democrats.

Similarly, one might be an atheist among believers and a believer among atheists.

What can be judged as a flawed moral is in fact, when not subsumed to opportunism, an epistemological balance.

The atheist mind could be put on rest if it looks to religion (when not violently fanatical) as a *spiritual placebo*.

Christian religion, with the "church within", signaled to man the universal power available to him in himself.

The idea of liberalism and market economy as main causes of the shortcomings of post communist countries fails to see that these societies were already sunk in corruption, rooted in a widespread mentality of loose compromise. Liberalism and market economy were only the welcomed frame used to boost the old habits.

Oddities (in perspective of some opinions about the Romanian communist regime: in the '70s I had (as a teenager) a mixed cultural frame, a patchwork of official propaganda filtered by some revisionist contemporary novels and the trendy then 'eurocommunism', American liberal movies and pop-rock music, hippie looks (minus the drug addiction), modern poetry.

Young boys having long hair, wearing blue jeans and listening to rock music were trends spreading in the seventies in the communist countries too.

In retrospect, contemplating the human spectacle, with an eye to the Gusdorff's testimony about '68, I see it as a form of herd syndrome. The inclination I had for critical thinking and for social fairness lacked a proper informative foundation, especially a classical one. Interest for political science materialized in the thesis for the license diploma. The subject, inspired by then trending eurocommunism, was judged as inadequate for the history department of the university, but it couldn't be rejected due to ideological reasons. The real problem with the thesis was that it ignored the economic issues, had relative few bibliographical resources and a big blind spot on how the real people think and behave. Afterwards, when I saw that there is no official genuine interest in open social and political analysis, I gave up the pursuit of the study. Later, skepticism about the usefulness of this type of research drove the final nail on the deck.

History is taught to boost national/local pride, to support some political ideology, is taught as a highly subjective selection from highly subjective sources, is taught as a spectacular show of events, as a collection of curiosities and mirabilia, is taught as a civic and ethical code, and always delivered as truth under a pretence of debate or under the colorful umbrella of relativism. The works on history are like painting - an aestheticization.

The history learned in school was a skeletonized one. Any history is selective, but this one lacked essential details.

Mankind is heterogeneous, but is universal. If the former colonized countries would become major economical and political great powers they would act according to their new status. The play on the international geopolitical level is similar to the landscape of home politics (ie, with a strong expression, the former slave would be the present master).

The post colonialist studies are echoing the idealized, rousseauistic image of the "savage".

Atrocities are committed on a daily basis, many of them with the conviction of a performed duty.

Fanatics are people of hatred. They have no real religious or non-religious 'high' principles. They use ideological tricks (the zealots are putting on the mask of God) to justify their shortcomings. Their violence is the other face of cowardice. Their 'heroism' is a masquerade.

Some people show their creeds as if they were majorettes or 'hooligans'.

Political wisdom is the dirty mirror of cynicism. Napoleonism, a catch-word for reckless political ambition toward a vain glory.

Heroism - there is no such thing. There are only performed duties and follies.

Justice has become more liberal only to increase in many cases the advantages of criminals against their victims. This process is somehow mirrored in education, where discipline has become a mere obsolete notion, synonym to traumatic authoritarianism, although almost every aspect of life is requiring discipline.

Commuting the death penalty to lifetime prison is meant to substitute one punishment with another, more severe - one would have plenty of time to repent, to be tortured by his/her own conscience.

What is wrong with the discussion about death penalty is exactly the notion of penalty. In the case of a serial killer, the sentence of taking his/her life is not a punishment, but a necessary act of protection of other potential victims. Similar cases must have the same justification. But political driven sentences or other trials based on hatred issued by discrimination are criminal abuses. And just because abuse or simple error is something you can always expect from people in the judiciary (even in a real independent one), the death penalty is a sensitive issue.

the grandfather i never met

He was a public functionary. He enjoyed, I was said, to play chess and to solve math problems. He was in passionate love with his wife. (They inspired the characters Luigia and Pietro in "Julia's Secret Notes").

He had to go in the war. Was among the many who were called to regain Bessarabia from the Russians (1941). Marshal Antonescu, loyal to Germany and convinced that

only the collapse of the Soviet Empire will secure the east frontier of Romania and ensure the preservation of the civilized world, decided to continue the military campaign beyond the Dniester.

In the battle of Odessa my grandfather was between the 17,729 dead (he died at 01.10.1941, as a Lieutenant). He left behind a 23 years wife and a 5 years daughter.

I never think of him as a "hero". I am only sad for a love smashed in its full blossom and for a tortured child's soul. The only historical record for me is that I never met my loving grandfather.

People celebrate life, and life is mostly a string of mistakes.

Minorities tend to become dominant and majoritary. 'Equality' implies inequality, 'inclusion' implies exclusion.

There is nothing to be proud about sexuality. One can't be proud of eating, drinking, sleeping. And, of course, one can't be proud of any form of abusing these needs.

People shamed for their sexuality marched defiantly, showing that they are not ashamed, on the contrary, they are proud - pride here is just a rhetoric.

Love is filtered by material considerations and social conventions. Even 'unconditioned' is a convention.

Love is not synonymous with sex, and pure sex is not love.

The Oxford Handbook of Carl Schmitt (2016): Schmitt "was exceedingly driven in this quest— sometimes by considerations of power, at other by matters of principle. Though repeatedly crippled by self- doubt, Schmitt desperately wanted to succeed in life, to be someone. And he wanted to be seen to be someone."

In a numerology book signed by Gladys Lobo a personality defined by the numbers of Carl Schmitt's name is described as having material success, glory, prestige, very big ambition, radicalism, possible excess of materiality, lack of scruples.

The prohibition is not indirect recognition of the value of what is forbidden.

Haiku is a poem that did not take flight.

Freedom of press

In the beginning was the word. At the end, a punch in the mouth.

Centuries ago, the heads of state were in the front line on the battlefield. Today, because we are more civilized, they politely repeat: "After you".

Niklas Luhmann describes, with other (borrowed) terms, aspects known from other points of view. The Luhmannian perspective is not revolutionary. The abstraction it proposes offers nothing to the concrete activity. Redundant. He writes of "condensation", but fails (or does not want) to apply it to his own writing. A "universal grammar"/a general scheme (the goal of social and natural theorists). Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht states that Luhmann repeats what has already been written, the only original idea being that of the second observation/ Beobachter des Beobachters.

The perspective constructed by Luhmann in *The Society Of Society/ Die Gesellschaft der Gesellschaft*

is equivalent to the one to which it is proposed as an alternative. The indexing as unrealistic of some answers to the problems of human society is not something new. The technical vocabulary is not original, certifying only the extensive area of Luhmann's readings.

We are always observers from within.

"Probability of improbability" is only an apparent paradox, because "improbability" is subjectively defined.

It is not true that Luhmann's writing style is cumbersome. It is clear, sometimes picturesque.

There are two permanent reminders that should guide our actions: irreversibility of time and quality.

The poet should not be an actor. Poetry should not be a mask. Nor stylistical or ideological opportunism.

Present can't see itself as Past.

It has a mistaken feeling of continuity/permanence.

No wonder that later it is beset
by a sickness named 'nostalgia'.

A short biography of an author is useful. A long one is a bore.

Literary criticism is just as its object - perishable.

The output of literary workshops are mere average soldiers, not worthy generals.

Fate is the sum of contingencies, and destiny is necessity.

Will nicht der Glaube am Märchen abzulegen, weil an das Böse nicht gewöhnen will.
"Realismus" hat mit dem Idealismus zu tun, es ist nicht das Kriechen unter dem
Bösesgewalt.

Sich immer wiederholen, und stumpf werden.

Die Kultur ist wie der "nackte Kaiser" im Märchen. Das rechtfertigt nicht die
Kulturwerke zu niederreißen.

In dieser Welt nur halb leben (Hl.Paul) ist eine hoffnungsvolle Hoffnungslosigkeit.

National/vaterländischer Stolz ist nicht notwendig und nicht ausreichend für die
Bürgerpflicht.

Das Einsamkeitsgefühl in kleine und großgesellschaftliche Formen verhüllen.

Es ist eine Unfähigkeit, sich in eine Kultur zurechtzufinden, wo der Leichtsinn
(schwacher Sinn für die Vergänglichkeit) der Leitfaden ist. Dieser Standpunkt ist
besser zu verstehen von der Beobachtungsperspektive der Eitelkeit.

Mit Heldentumsgedanken wird das Leben eine Schlamperei. Die Geschichte ist voll
von diesen Kopfverdrehungen.

Die Vernunft üben, um das Intuition zu entwickeln.

Die Anerkennung der Begrenzung der Erkenntnisfähigkeit ermöglicht eine Erweiterung eben dieser Grenzen (Heisenberg, Bohr, de Broglie und Schrödinger, Gödel). Die Lehre ist alt, sie war missgeachtet wegen des theologischen Missbrauch.

Lessingsche Aufzeichnungen

- Die Vollkommenheit ist nur als All zu betrachten, man kann nicht von der Vollkommenheit der einzelnen Dinge zu sprechen, aber siehe Leibniz: die werdende einzelne Vollkommenheiten. Das bringt auf die Beziehungen zwischen Dinge und Leute, diese zu entwickeln, nicht nur die Monaden. Man sagt, eine Monade ist ein Mikrokosmos, ist das All im Einzelnen, aber Lessing zeigt "die Unvollkommenheit" dieser Meinung. Eine Monade kann widerspiegeln das All (nicht Alles), und/um mit anderen anzuknüpfen. Es ist wie ein Lichtzeug, voll angezündet nur wenn alles mitmacht, eine einzelne Energiequelle. Lessing schreibt über die Vollkommenheit unter der Titel "Über Großmütigkeit und Mitleid" - ergründet das Problem der Moral von einer ontologischen und logischen Perspektive ("Dogmatisch in seine Prinzipien, aber skeptisch in seiner Untersuchungen"). Man kann werden nur was du bist : die Perfektibilität ist gegeben, um nichts Geringeren, und nicht etwas Besseres zu werden. Was Goethe in sein Jugend plagte: Um seinen Verstand auszubreiten , muß man seine Wissbegierde einschränken .
- Lessing lobt (zumindest in Jugend) die allgemeine Meinung über das Genießen des Lebens durch Wein, Singen und Freundschaft. Das kommt auch von einer Verachtung der "falschen Frömmigkeit". Übertriebt: "des Weins Gebrauch allein unterscheidet uns von Tieren" und "die Wahrheit der Mehrheit ist glaubenswürdig".
- Indirekte Selbstkritik: Selbstbetrügerei (durch eigene Meinungen oder Ansichten, keine Gesetze - nur Zufall, Si enim fallor, sum , sagte der Heilige Augustinus) ergibt sich als genügender Glaube (in einem Gedicht über die menschliche Glückseligkeit).
- Dichter = Maler (in einem Gedicht an den Herrn Baron von Sp.).

- Feinere Empfindungen kann man in einem mit Arbeit viel beschäftigen Leben nicht entwickeln. Wie in das Alte Testament, die Arbeit ist keine Segnung. Nur in Ruhe [otium] kann man etwas besseres werden. Ein Beispiel dafür sind die "fleißige" Deutschen und die "witzige" Franzosen, die von der Arbeit der ersten Nutz machen.
- Kaufmannsinn und Lüge sind das richtigste für dieses Leben (Anton, im Gespräch mit Lysander) ("Damon": eine Gesellschaft auf Genuß, Betrug und Verstellung gesinnt).

Tugend ist größer als Liebe, Tugend ist der Wille dem Schicksal zu folgen. Aber die Liebe kann stärker als die Tugend sein.

- Aufklärung = Was als vaterländisch erscheinen mag, ist vielmehr ein Programm der Besiedelung "weißer Flecken" (Länder) der Kultur, die die Lokale geistige, nicht die fremde Kräfte nützt.
- Freundschaft ist nur von Uneigennützigkeit bestimmt, wenn die Liebe ist egoistisch, eigennützig (und leidenschaftlich, ie unvernünftig, aus dem Gleichgewicht ausgetreten).
- Das Muster der Alten: die alte Zeiten waren weit bessere.
- Vernunft vs Religion - Religion muß vernünftlicher sein, Vernunft ist der Probenstein der Religion.

Intoleranz ist eine Wirkung der Affekte (22ter Brief: Aufrührer vs Patriot).

- Mehr studieren, als schreiben. Will nicht mit anderen zu wohnen, verweigert sich Briefe zu schreiben.
- Amüsierte Nachlässigkeit über Dummheit.
- Sich bemitleiden, nicht wie Kleist, weil immer etwas Gutes an etwas Schlechtes entdecken weiß. Ähnlich wie Kleist, Lessing ist mit Schulden beladen, und etwas unverschämt gleichgültig/gelassen gegen sie.
- Nicht immer schwärmt für das Theater (!).

- Mehr Zeit zu haben, das er allein mit seine Bücher zu beschäftigen. Aber Geld für Bücher zu geben ist eine Narrheit (!).
- Betrachtet sich mehr als Gelehrter und Polemiker, nicht als Schriftsteller, Dramatiker. - Liebhaber der Ordnung - vergißt was geschrieben hat - hat Grillen, ist hypochondrisch
- schreibt langsam, unzufrieden mit sich selbst - nachlässig
- unabhängig von einem Amt - Hagestolz
- des ganzen Leben ekelt (Wer wird durch Mitteilung und Freundschaft die Sphäre seines Lebens auch zu erweitern suchen, wenn ihm beinahe des ganzen Leben ekelt? - an Karl Lessing, Okt 1772)
- verdutzt, unentschlossen, mißtrauisch in sich selbst (1780)

Hebbel gegen Elise, wie Faust gegen Gretchen |Hebbel: die Kunst demonstriert daß das Leben sinnreich ist. Goethe: die Kunst mildert das Sinnlosigkeit des Lebens | Bewusstsein der Welt (Gott musste schaffen, um sich kennen) - die Entstehung des Unversums ist von Hebbel als ein psychisches Ereignis gezeigt.

Zweig-Rolland, Briefwechsel (1910-1940) Zweig: Moral und Kultur als Utopie.

Er ist Ästhet, weil er die Wahrheit und das Gute schichtet in das Schöne hinein.

Utopie, weil er als Voraussetzung, wenngleich das verneint, die Elite als "populistische" Gleichartigkeit hat. Es läßt doch nicht zu bestreiten, daß die Transzendenz wohl immanent wirkt.

Widerspruch ist es nicht, das Zweig in die Masse nicht glaubt, er ist einer Gemeinde der Individualitäten angetan. Während Zweig zieht sich in sich hinein (eine auserlesene Monade?), Rolland tröst sich mit dem Jenseits: dieses Leben ist nur ein Übergang, die Welt ist amoralisch, "sie ist". Aber er sucht auch den Kampf, er ist ein Don Quixote. Zweig ist ein Aufklärer und Skeptiker.

Die Vergangenheit steigt auf, wie ein unfertiges Ding, Sehnsucht herausbringend, die Illusion vermehrend, die neue Gegenwart mit der alten zu prüfen, um alle Zeitschichten in einer einzigen Gegenwart schmieden zu lassen.

Die Tragik der Liebe ist selbstverständlich. Das Leben, wenn auch nur mit seinem Vergänglichkeit, ist tragisch, aber durch die Liebe, die die Illusion, von der Tragik zu entgehen ernährt, dieselbe Tragik vermehrt ist. Je größer der Schmerz, um so größere die Lächerlichkeit. Den Schmerz niederzukämpfen ist eine Probe der Weisheit.

Man kann über die malerische Flecken der Vergangenheit nachdenken, sie analysieren, aber nicht in sie richtig einzuverleiben, um so minder an sie etwas zu ändern. Die Reise zurück in die Zeit ist schwer als eine Reise nach Hause zu nennen.

Mag Proust seine Vergangenheit erneut und bereicht erleben gehabt -es ist mir unmöglich die Schönheiten von ehemals herzurufen, sie sind untastbar, sogar unverständlich, prächtige Aussichten ohne Schlüssel.

Wenn Unzufriedenheit, Hoffnungslosigkeit und Bitterkeit den Schluss des Nachsinnen über die Geschichte der Menschheit machen, wie kann man weiterleben und wirkliches Teilnehmen an das Alltags haben? Es sind vielleicht die einige Lichte, die meisten ohne Folge, die flimmern uns aus der Vergangenheit entgegen, oder das unbeirrbar Interesse für Erkenntnis, oder einfach ein unergründlicher und unbewältigtes Schicksal.

Thomas Mann: Buddenbrooks

Verfall einer Familie - ein Verfall von Natur zu Kunst, Natürlichkeit vs Künstlichkeit (Widerhall von Rousseau). Die Kunst, so gut wie entgegengesetzte zur Natur, oder

nur zur anscheinenden Natur - der Roman bringt die Spannung zwischen Geschichte und Metaphysik, dann die zwischen Vernunft und Gefühl, und die zwischen Vorübergehendes und Ewiges/Ewigkeit.

Die bürgerliche Ordnung war für den alten Buddenbrook die Jugend einer Lebensweise, dessen Vitalität war das unbefangenes Bündnis der Natur mit der Kultur (wie beim wilden kaum gezähmten Nomaden | die Kultur als lutheranische Glaube).

Die kulturelle Verfeinerung führte seinen Nachkommen eine Entschwächung, eine Entfremdung um die bürgerliche Ordnung, um die menschliche Gesellschaft oder, wie bei Thomas' Sohn, um die Geschichte herbei.

Es ist auch die moralische Erschöpfung einer Lebensweise. Es ist jene Alterung jeder Gesellschaftsform, die bringt das verzweifelte Gehen auf die Suche nach der Unsterblichkeit aus - Exodus/Ausgehen aus/von der Geschichte, so wie das Neue Testament lehrt, und die Musik sind Häfen (lutherische) der Helden.

Wenn Christian Theaterliebhaber ist, an aller Vorstellungen teilnehmend, und die anderen alltäglichen Rolle auf dem Fleck darstellend, daß ist eben von wegen seiner Unfähigkeit die Kraft der Selbstkeit, eigener Rolle herauszukriegen, soviel er auch durchgrübelt mit einer unendlichen, fast bettlerischen Bemitleidung. Obwohl in sein reifen Alter das Theater geringachte, Thomas ist der Schauspieler seiner eigenen Rolle, die er empfängt, genau von wegen der Schauspielkunst, der entsprechenden Maske, wie eine zunehmende Bürde. Das ist die Ursache der Erschütterung der Glaube an seiner Identität, an seiner Berufung, an der Erbe.

Für Johann, die Tradition hat keinen Wert, und ihm ist die gesellschaftliche Repäsentation ein Abscheu. Die Entschwächung ist an ihm eine Entfremdung um seinen Leib, um seinen Daseins als verpflichtetes Teil einer feindlichen, widerwärtigen Umgebung, deren Bedeutung der Lebenskräftigkeit ist dieselbe wie der Angriffslustigkeit, der Gewalthandlung, der Grabheit.

Es ist ein Buch über die Spannung eines gerungenen Bewußtsein zwischen hie und da, das letzte intuitiv und voller Hoffnung vorgestellt (aber nicht als Verbesserung, sondern nur als etwas anderes) und nicht bewiesen.

Der alte Johann, auf dem Sterbebett: Kurios! Kurios!

Das Ideal: persönliche Gleichgewicht | zufrieden mit sich selbst.

